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MONTHLY



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BULLETIN

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Number 11

### HOWELL TO SPEAK AT NOVEMBER MEETING

The 544th regular meeting of the Golden Gate Audubon Society will be held on **Thursday, November 14**, at 7:30 p.m. at the First Unitarian Church, Franklin and Geary Sts., San Francisco. Our speaker will be John Thomas Howell, curator of Botany at the California Academy of Sciences, who will give an illustrated lecture on "The Flowering Shrubs of California".

The meeting will be preceded by dinner at the church at 6 p.m. (\$1.50 per person.) **If you want to come for dinner, please let us hear from you by Tuesday, November 12 in order to assist the cook in buying the right quantity of food.** Please phone either Val DaCosta in San Francisco (WE 1-5257) or Margaret Peterson in Oakland (568-7534). Bring a friend.

—ROBERT C. DA COSTA, JR., *Program Chairman.*

### EDITOR'S NOTE

If you did not receive your October *Gull*, it may be roosting in the Berkeley Post Office, which lost a batch of *Gulls* last month. We now have a new species in the Bay Area—the "wandering gull." We hope to remedy the exasperating delay by trying another post office (or carrier pigeons?). An earlier deadline will also be necessary. All material for the December *Gull* should reach the editor by **November 7**.

### FIELD TRIPS FOR NOVEMBER

On **Saturday and Sunday, November 2-3**, there will be a joint field trip of the Berkeley Hiking Club and the Golden Gate Audubon Society to visit the waterfowl refuges in the Sacramento Valley. Saturday we will meet at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. at the headquarters of the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge. This is 7 miles south of Willows on Route 99W. On Sunday, meet at the post office in Gridley at 8 a.m. for a conducted trip to Gray Lodge Waterfowl Management Area southwest of Gridley. For further details see October *Gull*.

On **Sunday, November 17**, to Orinda and San Pablo Reservoirs. Large numbers of ducks, geese, and shorebirds winter here. The oak and shrub covered slopes are good habitat for many land birds. No trespassing signs keep this area in a wild state. This is one chance to see hooded merganser at Cascade Lake and wood duck on San Pablo Reservoir. Meet at 9 a.m. in front of Orinda Theatre near Orinda Crossroads. Leader A. Laurence Curl, (526-7004).

On **Tuesday, November 19**, to Lake Merritt. This lake is a good place to observe many species of water birds at close range. Some unusual birds may also be seen in the pens and on display in the dome. A visit to the Rotary Natural Science Center is interesting and educational. This is a nationally known wildlife center. Meet at the Rotary Natural Science Center in Lakeside Park, Oakland, near the feeding area at 9:30 a.m. Leader, Paul Covell, KELlogg 6-4120.

On **Sunday, December 1**, to San Francisco Bay Salt Marsh Sanctuary near Newark, for a search for rails—clapper, Virginia and sora. Black rail could also be found. Mr. John Larson, Jr., Audubon Warden, and his assistant, Mr. Elwood Bunting, patrol this area at this time and will fill us in on where to find the rails. We plan to be on the levees on a plus high tide. A 6.6 high tide occurs at Golden Gate at 10:53 a.m. There will be some walking on rough ground. Bring waterproof footwear, lunch, binoculars, telescopes and friends. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the post office in Newark.

On **Saturday, December 7**, to Conn Lake in Napa County. Since 1951 this area has been on our list of winter trips. This lake is a favorite wintering spot for wood ducks. A good number of them can usually be seen. Whistling swan, Canada goose, gadwall, redhead and ring-necked ducks are often spotted. Red-shouldered hawk is present this time of year. Meet at the stone bridge about one mile northeast of Napa on the El Dorado Trail, at 9 a.m. Bring binoculars, telescope, a lunch and interested friends. Leader, Harold G. Peterson, LOchaven 8-7534.

On **Sunday, December 8**, the Conn Lake trip will be repeated. This is being done to split the group for better birding. Leader, John Ralph, LAndscape 5-0373.

—HAROLD G. PETERSON, *Field Trips Chairman*

### NOVEMBER FIELD TRIP FOR CHILDREN

Phyllis Lindley will lead the monthly field trip for children on **Sunday, November 24** on the Huckleberry Trail near Skyline Blvd., Oakland. Meet her at 10 a.m. at the entrance to Roundtop Regional Park, Oakland, and bring lunch. Geology will be emphasized. Parents are invited to join the group if they wish. Children eight years of age or younger must be accompanied by an adult. For additional information call Phyllis Lindley, 654-3532, evenings. A special article for children will appear in a future issue of *The Gull*.

### FOR SATURDAY SHOPPERS

Audubon Conservation Center, 2426 Bancroft Way, Berkeley, will be open Saturdays, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., through December 21. Many new educational items, as well as a variety of gifts, are available. The proceeds are for conservation.

### OBSERVATIONS

A blue-winged warbler was reported in Golden Gate Park on September 13 by Hans Meinhardt.

A tropical kingbird was observed on Bay Farm Island almost daily from September 15 to September 25. It was in the same location in which

the bird that previously wintered here was seen. It perched on the fence around Godfrey Park and in the apricot tree behind the house at 243 Beach Road. During the late spring I saw a tropical kingbird among the many western kingbirds in Corral Hollow between Livermore and Tracy. On September 12 Eleanor Hebard and I watched about ten rock sandpipers feeding among the rocks in the promontory behind Encinal High School in Alameda. After observing them closely for half an hour, I concluded that the unidentified sandpipers that I saw last year in the same location and also among the rocks forming the barrier around the new Oakland Airport were the same species.—ELSIE ROEMER.

### RICHARDSON BAY SANCTUARY

John Larson returned on September 30 for a permanent assignment at the National Audubon Society Sanctuary on Richardson Bay, Marin County. His official title is Manager, Richardson Bay Wildlife Sanctuary. He will continue to engage and supervise the Warden at the South San Francisco Bay Sanctuary during the hunting season. Mr. Elwood L. Bunting will again "watch over the area" from October 15 to January 15,

The Office of Western Representative has been interviewing persons for the position of Program Naturalist at the Richardson Bay Sanctuary, which will also be known as "The Audubon Center of Northern California." Both operations are maintained by the National Audubon Society. The telephone at the Sanctuary is 388-9843 (area code: 415).

### AUDUBON CAMP OF THE WEST

"The Audubon Camp of the West" is returning to Wyoming (Wind River Range) in 1964. There will be three Sessions: June 21 to July 3, July 5 to July 17, July 19 to July 31. The Session fee is \$125 with a deductible Registration Fee of \$25. Early requests for reservations are recommended. Address: P.O. Box 3666, El Monte, California.

WILLIAM N. GOODALL, *Western Representative.*

### AUDUBON CANYON RANCH FUND

We have met our first of ten annual installments on our purchase in the amount of \$24,750, leaving \$222,750 to work on. Contributions and memorial gifts on hand now amount to cash of over \$20,000 and securities worth over \$8,000. These funds are earning for us dividends and interest vitally needed for ranch maintenance. We also have a development fund of \$3,025 which has been allocated to the "Garden Club North Canyon". We hope these figures will spur you to even more enthusiastic efforts on this project.

### CANYON RANCH FUND-RAISING PROJECT

Personal address labels, including ZIP numbers, may be ordered from Mrs. Mabelle Hill, 887 Indian Rock Ave., Berkeley, and the proceeds will help raise money for Audubon Canyon Ranch. The price is \$1.00 for 300

gummed labels in a plastic box. Three weeks should be allowed for delivery of an order. For additional information please telephone Mrs. Hill, 524-4270.

### HAROLD GILLIAM—AUDUBON SPEAKER

Harold Gilliam, noted San Francisco newspaperman, author, and conservationist, was the speaker at the Golden Gate Audubon Society's luncheon on September 24 at the Marines Memorial Club. Mr. Gilliam has just returned to the San Francisco Chronicle after a year's leave on a special assignment with the Department of the Interior.

In his talk, he pointed out that we can't leave conservation of our natural resources entirely up to government. Private groups must be ready to move quickly to save small but important areas when they are threatened. He referred specifically to Audubon Canyon Ranch as a project of tremendous value to the Bay Area. He also read from a forthcoming book by Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall, in which Mr. Udall pays tribute to the great contribution by the National Audubon Society in the field of conservation.

The luncheon, specifically for members of SPUR, was chaired by Daniel Koshland and was for the purpose of publicizing our ranch campaign. Following Mr. Gilliam's talk, the film *Audubon Canyon Ranch* was shown. Our thanks go to the ten men who were such pleasant sponsors of the luncheon, and to Dorothy Erskine, Mary Hutchinson, and their co-workers for the time and effort they put into making it a success. We hope to have more functions of this kind later to acquaint outside groups with our society and its project.

—AILEEN PIERSON, Vice Chairman, *Audubon Canyon Ranch*.

### PLANTS OF THE TILDEN PARK NATURE AREA

(Notes from Josh Barkin's talk continued from the October *Gull*)

TOYON—The berries make marvelous cider. It supplies food for many birds, including the California thrasher and the wrentit.

SCOURING RUSH (*Equisetum*)—It is also called horsetail rush. The plant is high in silica—good for scrubbing pots and pans. This plant has been in existence thousands of years. It was a spring food of the now extinct California grizzly bear.

MINER'S LETTUCE—Food for Indians, pioneers, lazuli buntings, rufous-sided towhees. The Indians used to collect the leaves and leave them in the nest of the red ant. Then they shook off the ants and had salad dressing.

CATTAIL—The roots are wonderful food for the wild geese. The pollen makes good pancakes. The fluff also makes good insulation inside one's clothing for protection from cold in the wilderness. The tails can be soaked in kerosene and provide good torches.

TAR WEED—This is good food for meadowlarks, finches, towhees, red-winged blackbirds.

**POISON OAK**—Provides food for 40 different species of birds. The Indians used the berries for making a black dye (they were not as susceptible to poison oak unless they married a pioneer).

**COW PARSNIP**—If you are in the wilds with a toothache, dig below the surface of the cow parsnip plant and get a root, chop it into small pieces, and fit one into the painful spot—no more toothache.

**INDIAN SOAP PLANT**—It is said that some of the fibers from the root have been found in the nests of the western flycatcher. It is good for washing hair and good for poison oak. (Crush the roots and make a paste). Chop the roots and toss into a stream, and then pick up the floating fish. It is illegal, but if one were hungry and lost, the Fish and Game Department would forgive it perhaps. The Indians used this for feather-sticking glue.

**BLACKBERRY**—“Leaves of three” with blackberries—food for all. The wrentits and the black-headed grosbeaks love them. Marvelous source of plant sugar.

**WILD STRAWBERRY**—Food for cedar waxwings and song sparrows. It is fun to watch four or five cedar waxwings on a branch passing a wild strawberry back and forth.

**PINE**—All pine nuts are edible for man and bird. They are high in protein, oils, and fats.

#### ALAMEDA SHOREBIRD TRIP

Different tide conditions and changes on Bay Farm Island dictated a new route for the Alameda field trip on September 14. The group of 36 met at Lincoln Park about three hours ahead of high tide. After exploring the park, everyone went to the bay end of Broadway in Alameda, where shorebirds were observed to good advantage as the incoming tide brought them closer. Sanderlings and snowy plovers were conspicuous; they usually remain on the shore during high tide.

When most of the birds had left, the party went to the old loafing ground off Oakport Road in Oakland. The area has been divided by a dike through the middle that parallels Nimitz Freeway. The part near the road is being filled for industrial use, but the section toward San Leandro Bay is still occupied during high tide by loafing birds. Although an attempt was made to drain this section, water from the bay is again coming in and birds are finding a suitable loafing area. Several thousand were seen, notably black-bellied plovers, curlews, marbled godwits, and terns.

The next meeting place was Washington Park, a good place for lunch at picnic tables. After lunch the beach and lagoons near the park were explored (no birds on the beach and only gulls and terns in the lagoons). In the afternoon we returned to Bay Farm Island for a close-up of birds on the Doolittle Road mudflats. A visit to the open space east of Encinal High School at the west end of Central Avenue in Alameda was made next to see terns that loaf there during low tide and to look for rock sandpipers that had been observed two days previously on a rock promontory that juts into the bay behind Encinal High School.

McCartney Road on Bay Farm Island was not visited. Vegetation has increased greatly in recent months. Avocets, "peeps", and a few other species feed there at low tide, but the birds are hard to see in the luxuriant grass.

Extremely few sandpipers were seen anywhere; those seen were chiefly least. (The big concentration of "peeps" is now at the new Oakland Airport, where the birds are well protected and are finding food at the edge of the filled land.) Ruddy and black turnstones were observed in three different places. One northern phalarope was watched at close range. Terns were very numerous (Forster's common, least, one elegant and one Caspian). Fifty-one species were observed. These included brown pelican, great blue heron, snowy egret, pintail duck, sparrow hawk, clapper rail (heard), coot, snowy plover, killdeer, black-bellied plover, ruddy and black turnstone, long-billed curlew, whimbrel, willet, least and western sandpiper, short-billed dowitcher, marbled godwit, sanderling, avocet, northern phalarope; western, California and ring-billed gull; Forster's common, least, elegant, and Caspian tern; rock and mourning dove, Anna's hummingbird, western flycatcher, horned lark, scrub jay, chestnut-backed chickadee, bushtit, red-breasted nuthatch, mockingbird, robin, loggerhead shrike, orange-crowned warbler, house sparrow, meadowlark, redwinged and Brewer's blackbird, house finch, brown towhee, savannah and song sparrow.

—ELSIE ROEMER, *Leader and Historian.*

### REDWOOD CANYON TRIP

Observations were made along the northern end of the West Ridge Trail on Skyline Blvd., and around a marsh at Fernhoff Court south of Redwood Rd., Oakland, on September 18. Forty-eight flowers and 38 birds were listed. Half of the flowers were composites, of which the brightest were thistles, either yellow or lavender, goldenrod, and members of the chicory tribe—all yellow except the pink *Stephanomeria*. Most brilliant of all was wild fuchsia (*Zauschneria*) which is of the same vermillion color as one species each in genera *Delphinium*, *Gilia*, and *Penstemon*. Among the birds seen along the trail were warblers of four species, including Townsend's. Among the multitude of birds about the marsh were lark sparrows.

—MARSHALL JENCKS, *Leader & Historian.*

### THE CASE OF THE WANDERING GREY GHOST

On Sunday, September 8, 40 members of the Golden Gate Audubon Society boarded the *Grey Ghost* for a six-hour pelagic bird trip off the coast of Monterey. Visibility was only five miles but birding was excellent; in fact, it was a memorable day. Approaching the sixth-hour homecoming time the skipper relayed a message to our Field Trips Chairman by telling him the following story:

"A young couple upon descending from atop the Empire State Building were astonished to discover that all the land had disappeared." Finis.

Land to sea radio contact was comforting except—we were not able to state our location since we did not know it ourselves. Apparently the compass was going one way and the boat the other way.

With the many sooty and pink-footed shearwaters we began to see a few New Zealand shearwaters which were a month too early off the coast of Monterey. Little did we care at that point if the *Grey Ghost* had ventured too far west on the Pacific Ocean, for we were being entertained by a large school of Dall porpoises. Our boat, a fishing vessel, was completely surrounded by these lovely and playful mammals, who at times rocked the boat with all their antics. There were black and ashy petrels and a Leach's too—a tufted puffin on port side and the rare swift skua within arm's reach on starboard. But—now—more surprises were in store. Breeding to Baja California, what were the Xantus' murrelets doing here? And then—the long-tailed jaeger from the Arctic certainly did not help matters, either.

Even a mourning dove was added to the bird list. This lone bird flew about the boat many times in hope of finding a perch to rest awhile. Black-footed albatross, along with pomarine and parasitic jaegers, were delighted with the anchovies we fed them. The aggressive but elegant long-tailed jaeger got his share, to be sure. We also had pigeon guillemots, Cassin's auklets and a rhinoceros auklet, too. The world's four species of skuas and jaegers made this trip one to be remembered. Another school of porpoises frolicked for us on the way home. Four hours late on a six-hour boat jaunt, we landed in fine spirits and excellent condition.

—VALERIA G. DaCOSTA.

### NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members to our Society: from Berkeley, Miss Margaret Conant, Mrs. Martha F. Hamburger, Mr. C. M. Holmes, Mrs. Edna S. Spalding; from Oakland, Miss Dana N. Frederic, The Junior Center of Art & Science, Miss Rose E. Luis, Joe C. Sweet, II, D.D.S.; from Richmond, Miss Linda M. Van Loon; from San Francisco, Miss Ethel Louise Abbott, Mr. A. E. Conlon, Mrs. Arnold H. Fox, Miss Elizabeth McClave, Miss Kathryn Weaver.

—VALERIA G. DaCOSTA, *Membership Chairman.*

### SANCTUARY AND MEMORIAL GIFTS

The following gifts of remembrance were made to the Audubon Canyon Ranch Fund:

#### *In Memory of:*

Lois Ruffner

" "

" "

" "

Lord Allanbrook

Mrs. Frances Bonner

Mrs. Jessie Trueblood

Mrs. Edwin Grabhorn

—DR. ALBERT BOLES, *Sanctuary & Memorial Fund Chairman.*

#### *Gift of:*

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Established January 25, 1917

A Branch of the National Audubon Society since 1948

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Claims for missing numbers of THE GULL should be sent to the Editor. Changes of address should be sent to the Membership Chairman.

Monthly meetings second Thursday, 7:30 p.m. Joint Membership, Local and National, \$8.50 per year, includes AUDUBON MAGAZINE and THE GULL. Subscription to THE GULL separately \$2.00 per year.

Visit the Conservation Center of the NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY  
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